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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with three components of the quality control process in teacher preparation: certification, competence, and assessment. Each component is described in terms of its types and uses; then they are discussed as conglomerates to describe various systems in operation. This is done by a review of procedures in selected states and a summary statement on the advantages and disadvantages of the various processes. Two of the difficulties cited are the problem of assessing intangibles such as affective factors and those which make a good teacher-student relationship, and the need for more clarification on competency-based teacher training programs and consequent assessment. The third section of the paper deals with certification, competence and assessment in terms of future training and assessment. Here, the competencies identified are professional identity, cultural and international awareness, consumer research orientation, and curricular diversity. The paper concludes with several recommendations to the profession in regard to competency, and suggestions about certifying native speakers of uncommonly taught languages so that these languages may become part of the U.S. secondary school curriculum. (AMH)

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER CERTIFICATION: STATE OF THE ART

In the field of foreign language education, the professional preparation of teachers is a long-discussed, well-documented issue. As early as 1948, Stephen Freeman aroused the foreign language profession with calls to ". . .bring pressure to bear upon state boards and other certifying agencies. . .to adopt higher standards of certification, in terms of the recommended program of training."[1] The groundbreaking initiatives of the Modern Language Association charted, some twenty years ago, a new direction for the training and development of prospective foreign language teachers. Yet, at the opening of a new decade, the issue of teacher competence endures as one of the most perplexing and tenacious problems confronted by the profession.

INTRODUCTION

The education industry, for at least the past two decades, has been characterized by what Johns and Morphet term, "the input-output environment of accountability."[2] Cries for quality control are a reflection of the relatively new product orientation of a discriminating public who demands that we fulfill qualitatively and quantitatively all educational claims and responsibilities. It is difficult to discern whether the military/managerial ethic of accountability crept or bounded into the pedagogy circles; yet, its instrument, systems theory, now appears firmly entrenched in educational management, through such familiar applications as: long-term planning, needs assessment, management by objectives, student minimal competency testing, and performance-based teacher education.

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Of late, public scrutiny has focused on the most visible product of the educational system--student performance--and on the most costly element of the production process--the teacher. Dissatisfaction with the quality of the former has led some states to the adoption of periodic minimal competency assessment. Dissatisfaction with the latter has led, in many cases, to a re-evaluation of current certification procedures and preservice/inservice training effectiveness. Legislatures are calling for improvements in the process that prepares and certifies teachers as one means of bettering the performance of students. Professional literature on the subject is replete with pleas for alternatives to the transcript review process--alternatives which would base certificate award on demonstrated knowledge and performance.

In challenging the real meaning of a professional teaching certificate, publics have argued that course and credit "gathering" procedures are tantamount to a system of social promotion: because a teacher has certain courses listed on a college transcript and is certified as having completed them, does this mean that that individual is prepared to do a job that someone else without similar "credentials" could not do?

The systems theory approach to this problem has stimulated heated professional debate concerning the desirability of teacher preparation programs, assessment techniques, and certification procedures which are based on certain specific identified "competencies" held to be indicative of good teaching performance. Investigations of such systems have uncovered no easy solutions, no uniform nationwide applicability. The variety of routes taken by the states testifies to the complexity of these issues.

This paper will deal with three fundamental components of the quality control process in teacher preparation--certification, competence, and assessment--first, separately in terms of types and uses; second, as conglomerates to illustrate the various systems presently in operation, and third, in discussions of the present status and future directions of the competency assessment certification movement in foreign language education.

CERTIFICATION

The issuance of a teaching certificate, traditionally a state-empowered act, is, in essence, a testament to the public that an individual is fit to perform the tasks associated with the job of an educator. It is more or less a truism that the student-teacher who leaves the college/university training ground is not, however, a finished product. For this reason, a common policy is that of awarding "provisional" or temporary certification subject to renewal through various inservice avenues and within the time limitations dictated by the certificating agency. This paper will focus primarily on the acquisition of the entry-level certificate; that is, the procedures for identifying qualified teachers based on preservice training.

Definitions as to what "fitness" means vary greatly and are reflected in the variety of certificating systems utilized by the states. There are basically three identifiable types of certification procedures: transcript review, program approval and competency assessment. The first two essentially entrust responsibility for accreditation of applicants to the institutions of higher learning. The third form shifts the responsibility for assessment of applicants to the certificating agency itself.

Transcript Review.

The most traditional approach to awarding certification is that of reviewing the transcript of the certificate applicant to verify that required course or credit quotas as dictated by the state education agency have been fulfilled. State-established requirements in this approach vary from a flat prescribed number of foreign language credit hours (anywhere from 18-36) with no stipulation as to coursework areas, such as the statement: "a minimum of 24 semester hours in a language or 18 semester hours if taken above the first year college level" to generic summaries of coursework: "36 hours above the introductory level to include language (conversation and composition), literature, and culture/civilization." Many states still retain this model although, at least on the surface, it contains no mechanism for quality control, no accountability factor. Such a model assumes that 1) teacher training institutions will provide quality and varied learning experiences and 2) that teacher candidates will be wise enough to select the right ones.

Program Approval.

A widely-used system at present, the approved program approach gets its name from the fact that teacher training programs of higher education institutions must meet with the approval of state departments of education in order for their graduates to receive certification. Granting of such approval may be based on the institutions's conforming to certain guidelines

or requirements in general pedagogy and specialization areas--guidelines either generated by the state education agency, teacher organization, or adopted from one of the national or regional accrediting agencies. Periodic checks by teams of educators attempt to insure that the institution has followed the state requirements. If the college has done so, its program is approved and graduates of that program can be recommended for certification with certification almost completely assured following graduation. Under this approach, the college or university essentially vouches for the quality of the teachers it produces. Program approval approaches reflect the philosophy that teacher preparation programs should be planned as a whole rather than existing as a series of discrete courses.

Actual practices under this method again vary greatly from one state to another--first, in the group from which the guidelines originated; secondly, in the extent to and manner in which institutional compliance is monitored and interpreted; and third, in the degree of specificity with which these requirements or guidelines are stated. Guidelines for approval issued by state departments of education range from generic summaries of skills and knowledges to be obtained by teacher candidates, to specific identified teacher competencies to which the program must be directed.

A common practice among states is that of the adoption or adaptation of guidelines generated from regional or national accrediting agencies, such as the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) whose guidelines were the result of cooperative effort with the Modern Language Association. In such cases, the primary task of the certificating body becomes one of interpreting these guidelines

and judging the extent to which the institution's program is in compliance. This is not an easy task, as a look at selected passages from the NASDTEC standards illustrates:

STANDARD II. The program shall provide prospective teachers with:

--an awareness of language as an essential element of culture.

--a knowledge of the present-day objectives of foreign language teaching as communication and understanding of methods and techniques for attaining these objectives.

--. . .the relation of modern foreign language study to other areas of the curriculum.

--. . .an understanding of principal ways in which the foreign culture differs from our own.

Though a university may offer specific courses to comply with these guidelines or integrate these objectives into the total program, what is to insure the effectiveness of these programs? In short, how do we know teachers, indeed, will acquire these skills? What coursework, for example, would satisfy objective #1 or #3? Since these guidelines reflect a definite "product" orientation ("shall provide prospective teachers with. . .") it is questionable whether the program itself can be evaluated divorced from the product it produces. It should be noted parenthetically that these guidelines contain a definite lack of specific foreign language pedagogical emphasis, stressing the knowledge and skills desirable in the

teacher rather than the ability of the teacher to foster these skills in students. Literature is emphasized. Foreign "culture" is mentioned in the singular form. Indeed, according to Allen Rosebrock, "the effectiveness of these guidelines in improving college and university programs, and, ultimately, the quality of foreign language instruction will depend on the ways in which, and the vigor with which, they are used."[3]

CBTE Program Approval.

In recent years, a great deal of attention has centered on the concept of performance-(or competency) based teacher education, reflecting the view that a program of coursework itself may not necessarily provide for the development of those skills/behaviors considered essential for good teaching performance. Some states presently mandate or "encourage" the provision of such competency-based teacher education programs (CBTEs) by institutions of higher education.

It has been said that CBTE is easier to defend than to define. In fact, the actual number of such programs currently in operation is debatable. Since CBTE appears to be a fusion of many ideas and approaches, it is difficult to state how many of these elements must be incorporated before a program may be labelled CBTE. Basically, CBTE is a program which specifies expected teacher competencies in measurable terms and periodically assesses these competencies to provide opprotunities to preservice teachers for the acquisition of proficiency in areas of identified weakness. Competencies and criteria for assessing them are made public in advance and the

prospective teacher is held accountable for meeting them. Institutions required to meet a state CBTE requirement must define their program objectives and assessment procedures to the satisfaction of the certificating agency. Identified competencies in a CBTE program describe exit skills required in relation to knowledge, attitude and behavior criteria. Most would agree that a program is competency-based if it possesses the following characteristics which distinguish it from a traditional course quota or program approval approach:

1. Measurable competencies are specified and made public in advance.
2. Specific criteria for assessing these competencies, including expected levels of mastery under specified conditions, are made public in advance.
3. Objective assessment of competencies is conducted in terms of student-teacher performance.
4. Rate of progress through the program is determined by demonstrated competency of the prospective teacher rather than by traditional requirements of course completion in a fixed time span.
5. Facilitation of student achievement is provided through instructional modules.
6. Individualized instruction involves the student teacher in making instructional choices that are considered relevant to the teacher's own interests.
7. Instruction is field-centered with emphasis on performance in real settings.
8. Demonstration of competency is required for certification.

In the CBTE program preparation guidelines developed by an ad hoc committee of the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers (NYSAFLT),[4] a competency-based program approach identified the assessment criteria for each competency through: performance indicators (conditions under which competency was to be demonstrated: locale, format, procedures); assessment (form which would be used to determine competency attainment: normed test, interview, essay, etc.); and assessor (person(s) responsible for evaluating candidate growth with respect to the particular competency.)

Competency Assessment Certification

Program approval approaches, including CBTE, entrust the higher education institutions with the responsibility for assuring that their training programs have allowed for the greatest degree of professional development and competence possible in their preservice graduates; yet, according to _____ ,"It is axiomatic that training institutions cannot be persuaded to form their programs by specifying criteria for certification as long as these same institutions are themselves allowed to decide whether or not their products meet the criteria. . .the initial certification of a teacher must be based upon an evaluation made independently of the institution that gave the training."[5]

Such sentiments are echoed by those state policies which mandate the Competency Assessment Certification (CAC) route. In contrast to the program approval model, the CAC approach constitutes the award of an entry level certificate based upon a procedure for competency assessment which verifies the candidate's attainment of established minimum levels of competence by a process designated and conducted by the state education agency.

The fundamental difference between the two competency-based systems, CBTE and CAC, is that the CAC procedure attempts to draw a distinct separation between teacher preparation and teacher certification. Certificate candidates are not considered competent merely by virtue of their exit from an approved program institution. Competencies and assessment criteria are developed by committees composed of master teachers in the field, representatives from higher education institutions, and state department of education personnel, and are made public in advance to college/university teacher trainers. It becomes the responsibility of the institution to then train teachers to meet these desired levels of competence. At some point on or near graduation from the training program, teachers are then required to pass a criterion referenced test on generic and specialization competence, thus providing information as to the degree of competence obtained by the student teacher independent of reference to the performance of others. Tests may be administered by the State at the university or at some designated assessment center.

On the surface, competency-based education may appear to be a powerful panacea for the dilemma of inadequate teacher training; however, such programs are not without their problems. The validity of competency-based training and certification has come under attack by various sectors of the education community. Some of the questions and concerns regarding this approach will be dealt with later in this paper.

TEACHER COMPETENCY.

The word "competency" refers to a specific ability, skill, or crucial behavior which is considered an aspect of the in-class performance of the "good" or effective teacher. Most would agree that such competencies in the area of foreign language teacher preparation would take the form of expected levels of mastery in: 1) practical command of the language; 2) language analysis; 3) culture; 4)teaching-learning process; 5)professional development; and 6) affective domain. It is at this point, however, that agreement within the profession may naturally cease. What are the observable indicators of a potentially effective teacher? We can only speculate. Moskowitz warns that ". . .because we believe or even agree that certain competencies lead to effective teaching does not make it so."[6]

A review of the abundant literature on this topic uncovers a consensus as to the form and procedure for developing a "competency " statement.

1. It must be measurable in terms of specific aspects of observable behavior.
2. The more specific the competency, the more easily measured.
3. It must be arrived at through the input of varying groups: university professors, master teachers, supervisors, professional associations.
4. It must be reviewed and field tested to verify its measurability and and appropriateness as an indicator.

But as to the content of these statements of competency, the two samples below will illustrate the divergence of opinion held by foreign language educators regarding, for example, specificity. The first example is taken from a CAC model; the second, from a CBTE model:

Ex. #1: "Indicate the gender of a given noun."

Ex. #2: "Write in the language with command of vocabulary and syntax sufficient to express thoughts with clarity and precision, without using translation.

Questions also arise as to the proper orientation to utilize in developing competencies; for instance, should competencies focus on the teacher's practical command of the language or on the teacher's ability to foster student command of the language? Obviously, the two are not mutually exclusive. Moskowitz suggests that the more cautious approach to establishing teacher competencies might be ". . .initially to determine what students know, learn and do, and secondly, to speculate about the competencies and skills teachers must have to enable students to accomplish these ends."[7] This again is no easy task. In the CBTE program guidelines established by the NYSAFLT[8], competencies include an emphasis both on the student-teacher's practical command and knowledge of the culture and on the trainee's demonstration of the ability to enable the learner to comprehend, speak, read, write and be knowledgeable and understanding of the culture of the foreign language.

Lists of competencies written within the past decade frequently reflect the crucial need within the profession for teachers who are also: 1) trained in public relations, 2) aware of community resources and services, 3) curriculum developers and adapters, 4) consumers of research, and 5) able to see the role of foreign language education in the total school system and justify its inclusion to various publics.

While many groups and individuals have attempted to capture the essence of the "good teacher" through the identification and assessment of discrete competencies, NYSAFLT teachers stress the synergistic nature of competence--that it is the successful integration of these skills, attitudes and behaviors which ultimately indicates competency attainment.[9] Prefacing a list of teacher competencies developed by the Florida Foreign Language Association (FFLA), the authors remark: "It is. . .realized that while one can list the kinds of competencies one wishes teachers to have, such a listing does not constitute a description of "competence." Furthermore, they state, "it is realized that research is needed in order to determine <u>what</u> performance by the teacher produces <u>what</u> learning."[10]

In some states, the competency thrust has focused on the inservice classroom teacher. Lists of specific competencies and performance indicators developed at the state or local education agency level are used to assess the effectiveness of classroom teachers either as a self-evaluative device or for use by local school district administrators in assessing the instructional program. From these "checklists", deficiencies or weaknesses can be noted for planning of future (short or long term) staff development projects. Teachers exhibiting especial strengths or talents in given areas can serve as resource persons in like manner. Such checklists have proved useful to local administrators and district personnel who may not have the vast expertise required to evaluate the many and varied instructional programs.

ASSESSMENT

A recent report on teacher education and certification issued by the Southern Regional Education Board stresses the fact that there is a "pipeline system" through which a prospective teacher must pass before being certified and that: "If the aim is to improve the teachers who are being certified, then changes must occur somewhere along the pipeline. Obviously, there are several places along this four or five-year long process where this is possible. Furthermore, a change in one piece of the pipeline without change in another may mean no real change at the end."[11]

The most frequently-seen alteration in the pipeline structure is that of the addition of a test requirement to the approved program structure. The reasoning behind this approach is, of course, that such measures will be more likely to insure the quality of new teachers and make the teacher education institutions more accountable for the quality of their training programs.

Exit Exams

Standardized Achievement Testing: Of the standardized tests available for measuring teacher exit knowledge, the National Teachers Exam (NTE), developed by Educational Testing Service, is perhaps the most widely known. The NTE consists of a "commons" examination covering professional and general education and an "area" examination which measures the candidate's understanding of content and methods applicable to the particular subject area. Cutoff socres for certificate eligibility are determined within each state through validity studies.

The validity of the NTE as a predictor of teacher success in the classroom has been the subject of continued controversy. Studies conducted by Quirk[12] show it to have predictive validity in relation to inservice supervisor ratings, pupil ratings and class observation. Yet, a study conducted at Louisiana State Univeristy suggests that while the NTE is valid for what is taught in the classroom, it is not necessarily a good predictor of teacher performance. The authors of this study conclude that, "perhaps the important contribution of the NTE is to offer an objective measurement of academic preparation not as subject to institutional idiosyncratic variation as are grade point averages."[13]

Defenders of the NTE emphasize that it is a test of knowledge and principles of teaching, not a test of the act of teaching. It is not intended to measure teacher aptitude, motivation, interests, attitudes, maturity or creativity. Nor is the NTE intended to be a measure of classroom teaching performance. What teachers know about their area of specialization may or may not indicate what they will do in the classroom. One author has noted the perils (or benefits) of such testing instruments: "As long as the NTE determines who shall teach and what information is essential to teaching, the NTE will rule the undergraduate curriculum, which will in turn, focus on the test, not the classroom."[14] The addition of such a standardized test at the exit point of the teacher production process may, however, represent a false safeguard. It is imperative that the limitations of the NTE or other such tests as far as predictors of success be acknowledged so that test scores may be placed in the proper perspective.

Non-standardized Proficiency Assessment: One of the "givens" in foreign language education is that written tests cannot attempt to measure the oral/aural language proficiency of the prospective foreign language teacher. Yet, it is difficult to argue the importance of these skills to successful classroom teaching/learning. At least three systems, notably those of Massachusetts, Minnesota, and the District of Columbia, have established statewide procedures for evaluating the oral proficiency of a teacher candidate before certification may be awarded.

The District of Columbia assessment procedure is designed to measure the candidate's ability to function in the language(s) at the level appropriate to the position sought. The exam consists of two parts: 1) the oral interview which deals with personal and professional experiences and includes assessment of speaking ability, listening comprehension, and cultural knowledge, and 2) the reading segment which examines oral reading and comprehension skills through a select reading passage determined by the evaluators. Three evaluators participate in the interview: one interacts with the candidate in his dominant language; another interacts in the second language; and the third, competent in both languages, serves as an observer. Approximately twenty minutes are allowed for each interview. Grades are given for comprehension, accent, fluency and reading on a rating scale of 1 (superior) to 4 (poor). Interviews are conducted twice during the year, Spring and Fall. If unsuccessful the first time, reasons for lack of success are given and the candidate may return to retake the examination.

Massachusetts has established assessor centers to determine through a four-skill examination approach, the language and cultural competence of its foreign language certificate applicants. Candidates are rated by a three-member board (one K-12 teacher, one college professor, one native speaker), on a 1-5 scale on the following criteria: speaking/listening, writing, reading, history and culture. All members of the examining board are trained in interviewing techniques and appropriate procedures prior to their assignment to the assessor center. An individual who meets the required performance level in one skill, but not in another, is required to retake the examination until such time as the required performance level is reached. Candidates must wait six months before retaking the test each time.

Minnesota state requirements state that all prospective teachers of modern foreign languages must be assessed by the training institution according to the MLA guidelines, "Qualifications for Secondary School Teachers of Modern Foreign Languages" prior to receipt of certification. All candidates must receive a rating of "good" or "superior" in five of the seven categories of skills, to include: aural understanding, speaking, reading and writing. At least a "minimal" rating must be achieved in two of the remaining categories: language analysis, culture, and professional preparation.

State-developed Criterion Referenced Testing: Criterion referenced testing based on pre-identified objectives is an integral component of those programs which are competency-based. In the competency assessment route to certification, criterion referenced tests are administered to teachers either prior to or upon completion of the undergraduate training program.

The appeal of this assessment technique stems from the fact that it allows for an evaluation of the individual's performance, not as it relates to the performance of others through normed scores, but rather as it relates to certain specific expected outcomes and levels of mastery. While the validity of such test items is considerably less questionable than that of standardized testing, competency assessment procedures, at least in their present state of development, present distinct problems, especially when the objective is sufficiently vague that the assessment of it is prey to subjective interpretation on the part of the assessor.

While the identification and assessment of discrete grammatical skills may present a less than awesome task, there are certain competencies and areas of knowledge which lead to some rather unique problems. In evaluating, for example, a candidates knowledge of various aspects of a target culture, which aspects of which culture are to be selected? How would a competency such as the following be assessed: "A knowledge of the major literary works in the target language . . ." What works and what knowledge are to be tested and in what form? Obviously, such statewide criterion-referenced testing procedures would demand greater specificity of

initial objectives. Shearron states: "Failure to operationally define competencies leaves us with highly subjective measures that are no better than what has traditionally been used."[15] Yet, how specific can states afford to be without encountering competency "lists" which are unwieldy and without jeopardizing the freedom of institutions to determine curricular directions?

Perhaps the most difficult questions to answer regarding the entire competency movement rest with the development and implementation of feasible and accurate measurement devices.

Pre-exit Assessment.

The policies of some states reflect the view that an exit test alone, even if well-developed and carefully administered, will not be sufficient to have the full effects desired. Consequently, other segments of the training process are being manipulated, through the insertion of additional routing mechanisms, tighter and more objective quality controls of specific processes within the system, and longer and much more carefully scrutinized probationary periods.

A process implemented at SUNY/Buffalo in their competency-based program[16] plots the professional growth of each teacher candidate on the basis of progressive assessments of competencies through written and oral testing, video taping, self evaluation and personal interviews. The interview techniques (language not specified) focus on such typical thought-provoking questions as the following:

--Why will you make a good teacher?

--What is your philosophy for your subject area?

--What are your strengths and weaknesses in your field?

--What type of curriculum are you prepared to offer your students?

--What is the purpose or place of your subject in the school curriculum?

--What would you do if. . .?

--What can you offer your community and school outside the classroom?

--What are you interested in?

--Why did you choose teaching?

--Why do you feel qualified for a teaching position?

Such affective development techniques used periodically throughout the competency-based teacher training program could provide insight into the attitudes and motivations of teacher candidates and thus elicit valuable date for assessing and strengthening professional growth of the prospective teacher.

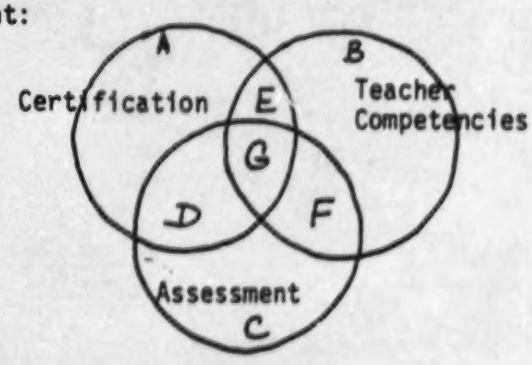
Field-centered Assessment: The primary weakness in most traditional teacher assessment instruments is that they are limited to the evaluation of academic knowledge and skills. Yet, knowing how to do is not the same as doing. Vansickle states, "We often contradict what we say by what we do and teachers and students react to each other under situations in which stimuli and responses are not well-controlled." Later, he advocates that "teacher behavior must be assessed in several contexts and over time if assessments are to be generalizable." [17]

The expansion of the field-centered experience component of teacher training programs so as to provide more performance criteria for evaluation is not a new concept. Educators have recognized that in many cases the student teaching experience has become a mere "formality". Yet, recently, considerably more attention has been directed to this oft-neglected area of teacher training. A 1979 national survey conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education[18] addressed as one issue that of the expansion of the field-base experience of teacher candidates. States surveyed were asked to rank the statement: "All prospective teachers must serve an internship under qualified supervision for one school year," according to current practices and anticipated changes. Of the forty-two states responding to this statement, 100% indicated that this was not the current practice; however, 14 states said they would consider the adoption of such a practice likely in their states in the near future (1980-1985).

Further research into the development of alternative evaluation techniques may help us to measure that which is currently considered "immeasurable." Yet, the complexities of such assessment procedures may preclude, in many cases, their wide-scale use with massive numbers of teacher candidates. Shepard notes that state certification officials have recognized the importance of these testing procedures for years but that "given the number of applicants in all disciplines, it would be impossible, [the officials] point out, to ascertain capabilities through special tests or observed performance."[19] Yet, according to Combs, "measuring only what we know how to measure--what is easy--is no substitute for finding ways to measure what we need to measure."[20]

COMPONENT INTERRELATIONSHIPS

The paths taken by the states and higher education institutions in approaching the issue of adequate teacher preparation are many and diverse. The diagram below illustrates the various potential constellations formed by the linkage of the three components: certification, teacher competencies, and assessment:



Area A. Procedures which fall in area A are the more or less traditional approaches of course accumulation or program approval based on SEA or accrediting agency/national organization guidelines.

Area B represents the development and utilization of lists of teacher competencies for purposes other than certification, such as inservice staff development planning.

Area C represents optional standardized testing or alternatives to the approved program approach such as an examination given for demonstration of proficiency to those candidates who have not accumulated required course credits.

Area D. shows the linkage between testing and certification in the award of certificates by means of an approved program approach plus the requirement of the NTE, MLA, or other standardized testing instrument.

Area E represents the linkage of teacher competencies and certification as in those states "encouraging" competency based teacher training programs or initiating competencies for use in monitoring such programs. Area F illustrates CBTE programs initiated by institutions of higher education without the legislative requisite for certificate award. Area G includes all state-required competency-based teacher education programs or competency assessment certification programs.

Where Are We?

A survey of the fifty states and three U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam) was conducted in the Spring of 1980 under the auspices of the Center for Applied Linguistics and the National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Language to determine which states are practicing or contemplating some type of teacher competency assessment for foreign language certification. Questionnaires were sent to the office of the State Supervisor of Foreign Language Education, or other person charged with this responsibility. Responses were obtained from 46 states and Guam (survey instrument follows). Chart I profiles the responses regarding programs presently in operation and indicates whether or not states are presently contemplating the move toward competency-based certification. The letters A, B, D, E, and G which head the vertical columns correspond to the diagram on the previous page and indicate which components are included in the certification process of each state.

Name and title of respondent _____ Date _____ State _____

Alfred Gage, Ph. D.
Foreign Language Specialist
State Department of Education
2500 N. Lincoln
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Questionnaire: Status of Teacher Competence Assessment for Certification in Foreign Language

1. Does your state currently have in place guidelines and a test for foreign language teacher competence for certification? ___Yes ___No
Comments: _____

2. Is such a plan contemplated for the future? If so, please attach documentation or briefly describe status of planning, including a timetable. Comments: _____ ___Yes ___No

3. If you answered "yes" to number 1 or 2, please describe briefly the structure of the mechanism, or attach such a description (e.g. state-administered tests, taken by all prospective teachers in senior year, all teachers must re-take exam every 5 years, "grandfather" clause, etc.) _____

4. If you answered "yes" to number 1 or 2 and the process involves a test, please describe it, or attach a description (e.g. test used is the new version of the National Teacher's Exam; test was designed by an in-service group over two summers, with consultation from testing experts, and includes sections of listening, reading, and writing, plus knowledge of culture) _____

P.S. If you have brochures or handouts concerning your tests, can we have a copy. (Please feel free to use the back or extra sheets to enable you to give complete responses.)

Area F of the diagram has been omitted from this chart: since the questionnaire was sent to state departments of education, results do not reflect any non-mandated CBTE programs initiated by post-secondary institutions themselves. Area C of the diagram has also been omitted from the profile. Admittedly, information as to "proficiency-by-exam" certification would be extremely useful; however, the structure of the survey instrument precluded the possibility of a uniform rate of response in this category.

It should be noted that the complexity of certification systems does not lend itself well to summary statements or categorizing. As Shepard notes, "Formal certification statements are like college catalogues. Almost never do they reflect the true nature of practices and requirements. This is not so much a deliberate attempt to confuse and conceal, however, as it is. . .the incapacity of bureaucratic semantics to convey highly complex situations."[21] In some cases, the responses obtained were subject to the individual respondent's interpretation of the question. For example, when asked if states had "guidelines and a test for teacher competence," some interpreted this as a "list of competencies" and responded "no." Some took this to mean "coursework guidelines" and responded "yes." Therefore, information is scarce regarding the exact system of certification which exists in many states. It may be assumed, however, that those answering "no" to this first question do not have a system of competency assessment certification functioning in their states.

More specific information, where available, is reflected in the profile. Also, whenever possible, the specific testing instrument utilized is indicated, either by NTE (National Teachers Exam), or MLA (Battery A of the MLA Foreign Language Proficiency Tests for Teachers and Advanced Students).

The single asterisk (*) appears in the appropriate column indicating a system which is being contemplated by a particular state in the near future.

Finally, it should be noted that this data may not be wholly indicative of the adopted certification procedures in each state. The questions specifically addressed the status of foreign language certification. It may well be the case that some type of general competency-based program has been adopted, but that it has not as yet been expanded to include the foreign languages.

(Chart I about here)

The results of this survey indicate that three states, Alabama, Georgia, and Oklahoma have already adopted the competency assessment certification model. Three other states, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Texas are contemplating the move toward this approach in the near future. Two states (South Carolina and Vermont) are considering the development of teacher competencies which focus on the inservice performance of teachers.

CHART I.

STATUS OF STATES/TERRITORIES REGARDING COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT CERTIFICATION

State/Territory	A Program Appr. Course Quota	B Other uses competencies	D Addition of test	E CBTE encouraged	G CAC or mandateCBT
Alabama					CAC
Arizona	X				
Arkansas	X		NTE		
Colorado	X				
Connecticut	X				
Delaware	X				
District of Columbia	X		X**		
Florida	X		X		
Georgia					CAC
Guam	X				
Hawaii	HASOTEC				
Idaho	X				
Illinois	X				
Iowa	X				
Indiana	X				
Kansas	X		•		
Kentucky	X				*CAC
Louisiana	X		NTE		
Maine	X				
Maryland	X				
Massachusetts	X		X**		
Michigan	X				
Minnesota	X[2]				
Mississippi	X				
Missouri	X				
Montana	HASOTEC				
Nebraska	X		MLA		
Nevada	X				
New Hampshire	HASOTEC				
New Jersey	X				
New Mexico	X				
North Carolina	X		NTE	X[3]	*CAC
North Dakota	X				
New York	X				CBTE[1]
Ohio	X				
Oklahoma					CAC
Oregon	X				
Pennsylvania	HASOTEC				CBTE
Rhode Island	X[2]				
South Carolina	HASOTEC		NTE		
Tennessee	X				
Texas	X				*CAC
Utah	X				
Vermont	HASOTEC	•	MLA		
Virginia	X		*NTE		
Washington	X				
West Virginia	X				
Wisconsin	X				
Wyoming	X				
TOTALS:	46		9	1	8

• = under discussion

** = test includes oral proficiency component

[1] New York did not respond to survey; information obtained from research; other states not responding include: Alaska, California, and South Dakota.

[2] A "proficiency statement" is required from the institution on each candidate for certification.

[3] Competency assessment for monitoring of Remedial programs

Four states indicated that some change in current certification procedures is "under discussion".

Nine states presently require some type of test upon graduation from training programs and prior to the receipt of an entry-level certificate.[22] Four states are now using the National Teachers Exam; two are using the MLA Proficiency Tests, and two others require an oral/aural testing component through interviews conducted at a state-established assessment center. Two additional states (Virginia and Kansas) are contemplating the implementation of some exit testing device.

A Look At Selected States

North Carolina

The North Carolina approach is quite unique in that it represents effort arising not from legislative requirements, but from a joint resolution by the Board of Governors of the 16-campus University of North Carolina System and the State Board and State Department of Education. In October, 1978, The University Board of Governors and the State Board of Education agreed that teacher training programs for certification needed to be improved. A Quality Assurance Program was planned and part of that program involved bringing together statewide committees, made up of university professors and public school teachers, to review stated competencies in all subject areas. In the fall of 1980, each subject area committee was charged with the task of evaluating these competencies with the end of developing new ones or revisin old ones as needed.

Competency statements in foreign language will go for approval by the Board in July, 1981 and will go into effect at colleges and universities by December, 1981. Universities are then to revise training programs to ensure that prospective teachers master all competencies developed. At the present time, the competency lists and performance indicators developed will be used to monitor higher education training programs in conjunction with visitations by evaluators from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). It would seem that North Carolina does anticipate the transition to the Competency Assessment Certification approach in the near future. The NTE exam will be used until such time as statewide criterion-referenced tests can be developed and implemented.

Competency goals and performance indicators developed by the North Carolina foreign language consortium include emphasis on the following exit skills:

I. Academic Skills and Knowledge: including listening, speaking, reading, writing, cultural paralanguage and visual literacy, vocabulary and language structure, and "general familiarization"with the history, geography, lifestyles, customs/traditions and achievements of "at least the major countries or areas where the language is spoken."

II. Professional Skills and Knowledge (including familiarity with major foreign language methodologies and ability to employ techniques and strategies for each; knowledge of the history of foreign language education; knowledge of differing learning styles of children/adolescents/adults; knowledge of the salient characteristics of dialects associated with different social classes.

A recognition of the pipeline process in teacher development has prompted North Carolina foreign language educators to address a third category of competencies, specifically those which should be demonstrated by the inservice teacher. This category, entitled "Enrichment", includes the following: Keep four skills actively in use; continue academic development; keep foreign language teaching skills actively in use; and continue professional development past graduation. No information is available as to how these competencies are to be assessed.

Georgia - Competency Assessment Certification

The Georgia plan begins with the "program approval" concept and in approving collegiate programs gives emphasis to the types of competencies that should be developed in prospective teachers. The certification approach, however, is a competency based model because emphasis is given to the skills, achievements and accomplishments of the teacher candidates as they can be measured by statewide criterion referenced testing.

Foreign language competencies and test items were developed by Georgia teachers, reviewed by experts across the nation, and subsequently prioritized by Georgia teachers. Objectives were then given to colleges and universities responsible for teacher training. At the present time, all college seniors majoring in one of the four available language certification areas (French, German, Spanish, Latin) must take the criterion-referenced test.

Provision for retake is unlimited. The test is administered and scored by National Evaluation Systems. Georgia also requires an on-the-job assessment of each candidate over a three-year period--essentially a long internship or probationary period with extensive evaluation. A committee review process has resulted in the identification of eighteen basic or generic competencies which are used to measure teacher perofrmance during this internship period. Special evaluation centers have been established by the State Department of Education and have as a primary responsibility that of seeing that each interning teacher is evaluated twice each year of internship. At each point, data will be provided from up to six sources: external evaluator, two administrators, master teacher, pupil reports and a colleague. Successful completion of this process would then lead to the award of a renewable certificate.

Competencies identified by Georgia teachers for exit assessment include specific criteria as to grammatical knowledge; knowledge of major events, artists, musicians, literature, history and policital, economic, and social characteristics of a culture, knowledge of aspects of daily life of a culture, the ability to identify other cultures where the target language is spoken. The criterion-referenced test also includes an aural/oral proficiency component in which the candidate is evaluated on specifics of pronunciation, fluency, lexicon use and listening comprehension.

In comparing the results of the 1981 survey with those of a nationwide study conducted in 1973,[23] one is struck with some rather puzzling contradictions. When asked, "Does your State Education Agency currently award teaching certificates on the basis of competency assessment" twelve states responded affirmatively in 1973: Alabama, Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Yet, the 1981 survey shows only three states presently operating CAC programs, at least in foreign language education. In 1973, six states indicated that they award teaching certificates to graduates of state-identified and approved CBTE programs: Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Texas. The 1973 survey also indicated that of the 49 states responding, only nine (Arizona, Hawaii, Indiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Mississippi, North Dakota, South Carolina, Tennessee) had made decisions against competency assessment certification; five others remained undecided; and 35 states (70%) had declared their intent to issue certificates through some form of CAC at a later date.

Contradictions in the reported data of these two surveys regarding Competency Assessment Programs may perhaps be explained by the following:

1) Divergent interpretations of the term, "competency ssessment." As discussed earlier, competency assessment appropriately refers to a program specifying pre-identified competencies which are assessed upon graduation by criterion-referenced testing. However, competency assessment may be construed by some states as the implementation of some testing process in whatever form as a prerequisite to certificate acquisition.

2) Since the 1973 survey was of a general nature, i.e., not geared to competency assessment in any given discipline, it may well be that states responding affirmatively do, indeed, practice generic competency assessment of general pedagogical knowledge.

3) The 1981 survey conducted for this paper was not designed to uncover information regarding state-mandated or higher education-initiated CBTE programs. Therefore, the entire competency-based movement may be much larger, its implementation much more widespread than is reflected in this most recent of studies. Indeed, this does appear to be the case. In a national survey of teacher education and certification practices conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education in June of 1979, eleven of the forty-three states responding indicatd that they base program approval on competencies prescribed by the college rather than on courses offered.[24]

It does appear likely, however, from scanning the results of surveys conducted over the last eight years, that many state competency assessment intentions have been abandoned. There are several apparant reasons for the decline in popularity of the competency movement. Hamilton cites such problems as instruction and evaluation, design and management by consortia, certification procedures, development and operating costs, teacher surplus/deficit trends, humanist reaction, and so on.[25] Yet, foremost among the problems associated with the many

forms of the competency movement is the present lack of a firm theoretical foundation--the lack of knowledge regarding the relationship of teacher behavior to pupil outcomes. While we can hypothesize about such relationships, until such time as they can be validated, Bailey points out, "we may be certifying teachers for behaviors that may or may not make a difference in pupil outcomes."[26]

Hancock emphasizes the difficulty in translating philosophical jargon into measurable, attainable, definitive goal statements: "We cannot begin to get a handle on those intangible competencies like "classroom presence" and "flexibility" and the complex knowledge-skill-attitude that a teacher must be in order to demonstrate "presence" and "flexibility." Even if we know how to identify such competencies, which many agree are at the heart of successful teaching, we are not even close to being able to measure them."[27]

Freeman, writing in 1942 on the subject of what constitutes a successful teacher, deemphasizes academic achievement and stresses, rather, such personal traits as, "a rich store of mature knowledge, untiring energy and vigor, contagious enthusiasm for his subject and his profession as a teacher, limitless patience, human understanding and sympathy."[28]

Wing reports of research conducted at Florida State University which suggests that "effective" teachers are characterized "not by particular methods, demonstrated competencies or personality traits, but rather by: 1) knowledge of the subject area, 2) sensitivity and capacity to empathize, 3) accurate and appropriate beliefs about people and their behavior, 4) positive self-image, 5) appropriate beliefs about goals and purpose of society, schools and classroom and a clear philosophy of teaching and 6) personal discovery of one's own appropriate and authentic ways of teaching.[29]

If indeed, teaching excellence is determined less by academic achievement than by the possession of those traits outlined above, one may well question whether teachers can be trained or whether they are simply "born to be." Which of these factors are within the control of the training institution or of teachers themselves? Is it possible to cultivate, for example, sensitivity, empathy, optimism and sense of humor, and to measure their degree of acquisition? In short, can we deal with the affective domain in teacher training or are our efforts to force all the elusive aspects of good teaching into a behavioral mold a careless investment of time and energy? According to Benson, "until education research provides us with better constructs for describing the teaching-learning process and until the profession itself makes the essential value judgments with respect to "good" or "bad" teaching, debates about the statistical validity of different teacher education programs, certification standards and selection procedures, are, in my judgment, exercises in less than fascinating futility."[30]

An additional cause for the hesitancy of some states to move toward some form of competency based certification rests with a lack of clarity as to which educational body should initiate the action--with whom does the responsibility for teacher competence lie? The previously-cited 1973 survey[31] concluded that state education agencies do not appear to be the prime movers in this arena. Of the thirty-five states declaring their intent to issue certificates through some form of competency certification at a later date, the authors predict, "presumably, in most cases, this will be a longitudinal transition on a college-by-college basis rather than a total short term changeover. . ." Assessment of teacher competence according to this survey, was viewed as the responsibility of the teacher preparing institution by thirty-seven states; four viewed it as the responsibility of the state education agency and eight as that of the local school district. Vansickle reasons that, "State education agencies can reach attainment of the competency assessment certification goal only when the preparation colleges and universities are "ready" for this complex transition."[32] The institutional conversion to competency-based teacher training programs involves a great deal more than mere acquiescence to the concept--institutions would need to 1) reach concurrence as to crucial competencies, 2) redesign programs to insure student teacher development of identified competencies, 3) develop materials to implement CBTE design, and 4) develop

and implement assessment procedures, instrumentation and materials to verify attainment of these competencies. Vansickle concludes that unless the state education agency wishes to make the principal thrust, competency based certification "seems doomed to riding the coattails of teacher education departments in the higher education community."[33]

PREPARING THE TEACHER OF TOMORROW

Leona Bailey, in describing how foreign language teachers will meet the challenges of preparing students for a world of global interdependence, states that teachers "must be and become much more knowledgeable, capable, effective and imaginative than they already are . . . they must have a greater competency in language skills, a competency attested to by impartial measurement, not simply by completion of certification requirements. They must have understanding and knowledge of the culture and people whose language they are teaching. . . they must become more creative and imaginative in their teaching. . . making a strong link between the classroom and the global environment. . ."[34]

It may well be questioned whether current training practices and certification procedures can produce such an individual. Program guidelines and teacher competency lists which focus solely upon the traditional language/literature/civilization triad may fall far short of meeting the needs of the teacher of tomorrow's classroom. Recognition of the vital need for increased linguistic and communicative proficiency in prospective and current classroom teachers has already led some states

and teacher training institutions to the implementation of proficiency assessment mechanisms and strategies. Yet, it would seem that the remainder of the prospective teacher's diet still consists of the traditional fare of methodology and literature garnished with a bit of "culture" and applied linguistics.

Converting traditional coursework syllabi into competency programs which address the same coursework orientation does not seem to be the answer, for there are new areas of knowledge and expertise needed by the teacher of the eighties and beyond. Some of these areas will be highlighted in the pages which follow, specifically: professional identity, international awareness, consumer research orientation, curricular diversity, and role understanding.

Competency #1: Professional Identity

Stephen Freeman, writing in 1941, addressed the problem of teacher "apathy" which is still very much with us today: "What interests me is whether the teacher stays alive and continues to shape his method, or whether he gradually lies down in his comfortable rut and permits his job to shape him and finally to strangle him."[35]

The massive "burn-out" epidemic which appears to be clutching all sectors of society has certainly not failed to take its toll on the foreign language teacher. An era of high attrition rates, competing curricular priorities, slashed budgets and back to basics mentality has intensified what Jakobovits refers to as the Battered Language Teacher Syndrome (BALT): "the constant alternation between. . .self elevation to instructional omnipotence. . .and infantile helplessness."[36]

The ability to cope and prosper in the changing climates of public attitude will require of the teacher a strong sense of professionalism, a clear personal philosophy, and a knowledge of and belief in the value of foreign language education. Paramount to a sense of professional worth is an awareness of the potential role which foreign language education can play in the lives of each and every individual, accompanied by knowledge of events at local, state, national, and international levels which impact on foreign language education; an awareness of careers for which foreign language skills are useful and desirable; a knowledge of research which suggests an impact of foreign language study on achievement in other disciplines and on cognitive/affective development in general; and an awareness of the purpose and goals of professional organizations. Hancock urges that teacher educators broaden their perspective "beyond mere classroom teaching competence" and recognize the need for teachers to find "power and meaning in their personal and professional lives." [37]

Competency #2: Cultural and "International" Awareness

The President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies forged, through its title if not specifically through its report, a linkage between two traditionally separate disciplines. The subsequent establishment in 1980 of the National Council on Foreign Language and International Studies proclaims, once again, the crucial importance of this union, citing as its primary task that of ". . .focusing public attention on

the crucial importance to the U.S. of effective communication with and comprehensive understanding of the world beyond our borders. . .to make a coherent, persuasive, and persistent case that high quality foreign language and international studies are vital to America's future." The Council's Task Force on Elementary, Secondary, and Undergraduate Education, created to initiate action in the educational arena, reiterates this commitment to increased international understanding: "The task force will urge the inclusion of international competence in the certification of teachers and the accreditation of teacher-training institutions. It will propose augmented inservice opportunities in international education."[38]

The "global-multi-cultural-international" concept has been viewed by some within the foreign language profession as a "good idea," by others as "just another bandwagon." Yet, regardless of the reception given this movement by foreign language educators and in spite of the varying degrees of enthusiasm (or reluctance) with which it is embraced, it does bring to the fore a sadly-neglected area in the preparation and certification of foreign language teachers. Program guidelines and teacher competency statements all too often focus on the belletristic aspects of language study, resulting in the subtle exclusion of teacher

competence in such areas as sociolinguistics, indepth cultural insight and basic understanding of social, political, and economic interdependence. Prospective teachers studying "culture" frequently study it in the singular and subsequently teach it in the singular to their students, focusing on "what the French do," or "what the Mexicans do." The resulting lack of a world view on the part of students has been documented in the recently-released ETS study, "What Students Know About Their World"[39](though this failure in international education is probably less the fault of the foreign language educator than of educators in other disciplines--or of education in general).

The establishment of competencies in international awareness undoubtedly awaits further research. As yet, there seems to be no operational definition of "international" education. Referring to the field of international studies, Harf states, "Indeed, there is no field. Terms such as global education, international studies, cross-cultural studies, and area studies mean different things to different people."[40]

It will be difficult also to prescribe teacher competencies in the area of international education until we have determined what competencies and forms of knowledge in this

area are appropriate for students at the various levels of advancement. Yet, the lack of current curricular expertise in this area should not deter the foreign language profession from the recognition of its importance in the development of future classroom teachers.

COMPETENCY #3: Consumer Research Orientation.

At best, as Gattegno acknowledges, there is a common tendency among teachers to be impressed by research but not influenced by it.[41] At worst, research is regarded with aversion and outright hostility by the classroom teacher:

> One has to recognize that there are a number of practitioners who don't like research and are often hostile to it. Some teachers feel threatened by it; they regard it as an attack on the value of their work as practitioners. Some regard it as escapism from the real issues. Some. . .expect too direct and simple answers to their questions and are disappointed when research gives differentiated and equivocal answers.[42]

Several reasons may be offered in explanation of this research aversion phenomenon. First is that of a basic distrust of theory--the failure on the part of many practitioners to place research in the proper perspective. If it cannot provide the answers on Monday to solve Tuesday's problems, it is judged as valueless. Secondly, research is viewed as intimidating by the classroom teacher who cannot comprehend the masses of chi squares, F-ratios and levels of significance.

The fact is that teachers are rarely trained to be "consumers" of research. Though some educators might question the desirability or feasibility of fostering such competencies in the undergraduate trainee, it is indeed regrettable that nowhere in the training of an average preservice or inservice teacher are such skills posited. For the most part, any emphasis given to research skills (usually graduate level) is in the form of training in conducting research.

The competent teacher of the future should have an overall view of the function of research and an orientation to the interpretation of basic research design. If such competencies are left neglected, a valuable avenue of professional development for the classroom teacher will be permanently barred.

Competency #4: Curricular Diversity

"Individualization" is a word which by now likely grates upon the ears of every educator. It sounds like a good idea--in theory. It is even a good idea in practice; yet, it is just so much "educationese" to many classroom teachers who recognize the fact that all students are different, that learning styles vary and that it is profitable to both student and teacher to accomodate these varying interests, abilities, aptitudes and goals, but who cannot realistically cope with such demands on their time, energy and expertise.

Foreign language teachers have traditionally been somewhat sheltered from the below average or even average student--theirs has been a primarily elitist clientele for whom the same grammar menu has somehow seemed sufficient. Textbook materials, prepared for the mass consumption of these teachers and students reflect a similar orientation. Teachers tend to "trust" these textbooks since they are written by expert linguists and pedagogues and to follow, for better or for worse, the course of study outlined between the covers--whether or not the content is realistically manageable, whether or not the drills are stimulating, whether or not the grammatical elements are improperly sequenced, the lexicon is absurd, or the cultural emphasis is narrow, sporadic, disjointed, or nonexistent.

It is probably futile to await the advent of the perfect textbook. The more realistic approach would be to train teachers to become materials adapters--to foster in teachers the ability to see the textbook as <u>one</u> resource--not the only resource in the language classroom. Needed is the competence to critically analyze and wisely alter existing materials to meet the needs, interests, and varying goals of student populations.

Needed also are teachers who are aware of and able to utilize principles of foreign language curricular design. The deliberate expansion of existing foreign language programs will require teachers who are able to offer alternatives to the regular sequenced approaches in order to meet the needs and interests and challenge the abilities of, for example, the "non-college-bound" and the talented and gifted learner.

Expansion of programs will also require teachers who are aware of the different needs and learning styles of the middle school and elementary level child. A 1969 nationwide survey conducted by Shepard[43] attempted to obtain information regarding separate certification or general certificate endorsement of foreign language at the elementary school level. At that time, nine states--Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, and Wisconsin--reportedly issued certificates (or endorsement) for the training of foreign language in the junior high or middle school. Shepard noted that the majority of states did not at that time make an administrative distinction for middle school, a typical designation being grades 1-6: elementary, grades 7-12: secondary. According to the 1980-81 edition of Requirements for Certification,[44] an additional four states (Florida, Missouri, Texas, and Wyoming) now

make such a distinction in the issuance of certificates (though, in most cases, grade level authorizations overlap). The certificate distinctions drawn by these states attest to a recognition that <u>different</u> types of competencies are necessary for teachers at the middle school level than at the secondary level.

While our professional zeal for infiltrating the lower levels of instruction is admirable, we must seriously question whether or not teachers presently possess the competencies to create successful experiences for learners at these levels.

<u>Competency #5: Role Understanding</u>

Having sat in the elective chair for at least the past decade, the foreign language profession can testify to the precarious existence it affords--an existence subject perhaps to the whims of an unsupportive administration, an indifferent community, or a reluctant and disinterested student. What is perceived by the foreign language teacher as a lack of support from various sectors of society and a lack of understanding as to the values of the product being offered has driven many teachers from the mainstream of education into self-imposed bitter isolation.

It is rather unlikely that the tenuous status of foreign language within the school curriculum will change in the near future. Certainly, without teachers at the public school level who have the ability to influence attitudes and the knowledge and expertise required to win advocacy, the likelihood of any change whatsoever is not imminent.

The competent teacher of tomorrow must have a sense of involvement in the total school system and an awareness of the special role to be played in the formation of the individual. Such competence would require, among other things, an understanding of curricular interrelatedness, the ability to cooperate with other faculty in the development of interdisciplinary materials and in the exchange of knowledge. It would also require a more indepth awareness of the many and varied responsibilities of public school administrators and support staff. And it would require the ability to seek and utilize community resources, not solely for establishing advocacy, but also for helping students conceptualize the link between foreign language study and their world.

Regardless of perceived "progress" at the national level toward winning support for foreign language education, it will be the competence of the classroom teacher which will

inevitably determine the future for foreign language studies. The competencies outlined in the preceding paragraphs represent a big order. Perhaps they will require sacrifices in other areas of the training program. Yet, it should be remembered that preservice programs will never succeed in turning out finished products. Teacher certification and training are processes. Many of the changes currently being made in state certification procedures reflect the philosophy of a preservice-inservice continuum. Whether these changes will have an impact depends, in Stoltz' assessment on ". . .how serious the states are about recognizing and realizing that it is a pipeline problem with today's children as the raw material input and their children as the beneficiaries or victims of what is decided now. It is not a problem of one-test, one time credentialing alone." [45]

Recommendations to the Profession

The future of the competency based movement is uncertain--this paper has attempted to highlight some of the complexities inherent in its philosophy and implementation. It remains to be seen whether some form of the competency-based model will present the long-sought solutions to the problem of inadequate teacher preparation. Yet, much insight has already been

gained as a result of the efforts of those states pioneering in its development. Perhaps most importantly, we have become much more aware of the many factors involved in the training of the second language teacher. The foreign language profession can ill-afford to ignore the responsibilities, challenges, and opportunities that the movement toward changing certification standards poses.

1. Information Exchange

In his report on teacher education and certification of the Southern Regional Education Board, Stoltz stresses the risks of states moving totally independently of each other, citing specifically, duplication of effort, needless repetition of mistakes, and unnecessary expenditures of money, time, and energy resulting from lack of experience exchange. He outlines the following opportunities for cooperative action:

A. The creation of regional exchanges to share information on plans, progress, and accomplishments.

B. The initiation of multi-state efforts to define key competencies and performance objectives.

C. Joint development of item pools or performance indicators.

D. Pursuit of cooperative research efforts.[46]

It is hoped that states currently contemplating a move toward competency assessment certification will maintain close and frequent lines of communication with their CAC colleagues and that they will be able to profit from such shared experiences.

Wing also advocates a "coordinating mechanism" to increase communication and cooperation among teacher educators, specifically through such regional organizations as the New England Association of Foreign Language Teacher Trainers or through the establishment of an administrative unit within the framework of existing associations. She suggests further the creation of a clearinghouse to review efforts in the area of competency based teacher education.[47]

For those states and institutions adopting competency based systems, it is important that their initiatives not be construed as a one time investment of effort. Competency lists, test items and assessment procedures must be continually evaluated in light of new research and changing needs within the profession. Perhaps we will never be able to determine what makes a "good" teacher, just as we will never be able to determine what makes a captivating performer or a successful artist; yet, further research into what actually goes on in the foreign language classroom in terms

of student learning may bring us closer to a knowledge of those measurable teacher competencies which tend to foster successful student performance and positive attitudes toward foreign language studies. Certainly, there is less to be gained if each state or institution proceeds in isolation.

2. Broader horizons

The history of foreign language instruction in this country is one of a very narrow orientation toward the Western European lanuages, French, German and Spanish being the traditional certification areas and secondary offerings. Frained teachers in the critical uncommonly-taught languages are extremely scarce. Freeman notes, "Unfortunately, most Americans who are studying the neglected languages. . .go into government service or research work and are not available for the classroom teaching of language."[48] Given the nationwide shortage of such expertise, it may be unrealistic to assume that secondary teaching positions and their accompanying non-competitive salaries will hold a great deal of attraction for this small corps of scholars.

More data must therefore be gathered as to certification procedures in states regarding such things as "proficiency-

by-examination." Research must be conducted as to the most feasible and effective mechanisms for utilizing the talents of the ever increasing numbers of native speakers of these languages residing in the United States. It is acknowledged that native speakers are not necessarily successful teachers; however, they can be trained. Certainly, present certification standards which discourage the utilization of individuals proficient in these languages must be re-examined in light of present and future nation-wiede critical needs and for the purpose of offering such individuals the opportunity and motivation for seeking classroom positions.

3. Cooperative Action

Some fifteen to twenty years have passed since the groundbreaking initiatives of the Modern Language Association in the areas of teacher training, certification and foreign language program accreditation. It would indeed be profitable for every foreign language educator to re-read the Golden Anniversary Issue of the Modern Language Journal in which the cooperative efforts of MLA, NASDTEC and ETS are well-documented. The work of these groups was indeed commendable and has had far-reaching effects on the profession.

Yet, in the years that have passed, our professional priorities have changed somewhat, our data base has grown, and our needs at the national level have been recognized and well-publicized. What is called for now is another such "meeting-of-the-minds" in the same spirit of cooperation and professional dedication as that witnessed in the sixties.

The call delivered to the foreign language profession by William Riley Parker is as apropos today as it was when uttered in 1966:[49]

> The present prosperity of language teachers. . . is, believe me, basically illusive; it can disappear as dramatically and unexpectedly as it appeared, for it lacks the solid foundation . . .That solid foundation is a practical consensus on the effective preparation of future teachers.

One thing has changed--we have already witnessed the demise of the prosperity of language teachers. The foreign language profession cannot wait for the tide to turn once again, for Parker's admonition is too frightening, too powerful, and too accurate to ignore.

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